



# Michigan Food & Farming Systems-MIFFS

Bringing Farmers & Communities Together

## **MIFFS Update Presentation to the Michigan Commission of Agriculture**

By Elaine Brown  
MIFFS Executive Director

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# Who We Are

Michigan Food & Farming Systems (MIFFS) is a statewide, non-profit organization whose purpose is to improve Michigan's triple bottom line – our economy, our environment and the social well-being of our communities – by promoting family farms, local food and sustainable agriculture.



# Our Mission and Vision

**Our Mission** is to help small and medium-sized farms operate profitably, produce healthy food for all people and protect the environment for future generations.

**Our Vision:** MIFFS is a recognized leader and resource to establish and develop more sustainable food and farming for Michigan, nurturing successful partnerships that result in healthy people and communities.



# Our History

MIFFS was established on August 6, 1998 and emerged out of a five-year W.K. Kellogg Foundation Integrated Food and Farming Systems grant to educate farmers about growing and marketing local, sustainably-grown food.



# Today...

Today, twelve years later, MIFFS has grown in membership and purpose with members and projects around the state centered around serving farmers and improving local food systems.





# Our Core Strategies

All of our programs and activities are based on four core strategies to serve family farmers and promote local food and sustainable agriculture.



# Assisting Family Farmers

- 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Farms Conference
- Technical assistance
  - Farm production
  - Hoophouse construction and Management
  - Business management skills
  - Integrated Pest Management education
  - GAP Workshops







**Hoophouse, Soil Quality and Composting Workshop  
for Hispanic Farmers**









**Annual Friends and Family Farms Field Day**



# Growing Market Opportunities

- Huron & Oceana Incubator kitchens
- Michigan Farmers Market Association
- Michigan MarketMaker
- “Meet the Buyers”  
Event at the Great  
Lakes Expo







**The Starting Block, Inc. Regional Kitchen Incubator in Hart**





## Accepting Bridge Cards at Michigan Farmers Markets

Everyone should have access to fresh, local food. Farmers markets are a great place to purchase local food and connect with the community. These training sessions are organized for market organizers, managers, farmers and vendors to provide step by step information for accepting Bridge Cards at your farmers market.

### Half-day Training Sessions:

- **Tuesday, January 26, 2010 from 1-4 PM**  
Traverse City Chamber of Commerce
- **Thursday, February 11, 2010 from 1-4 PM**  
Kalamazoo Public Library
- **Monday, February 22, 2010 from 1-4 PM**  
Executive Office Building, Waterford
- **Thursday, March 18, 2010 from 1-4 PM**  
Online webinar



### Topics Covered Will Include:

- Completing the USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Application to become an Authorized Retailer
- Preparing a Proposal for the Department of Human Services
- Alternative Redemption Systems
- Acquiring a Point of Sale Device
- Record Keeping
- Program Promotion and Community Outreach

### **Registration is required.**

Sessions are FREE to members of the Michigan Farmers Market Association (MIFMA), Michigan Food and Farming Systems (MIFFS) and the Michigan Land Use Institute (MLUI).

A \$15 fee is required for all other participants to cover the costs of resource materials. To register, complete the form on the back and return with a check as indicated. For more information, contact Amanda Segar at 517-432-3381 or [segarama@msu.edu](mailto:segarama@msu.edu).

These training sessions are based on work supported by the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP) Grant Program, Agricultural Market Service, USDA, under Award No. 12-25-G-0945.

Sponsored by: C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems, Food Bank Council of Michigan, Michigan Farmers Market Association, Michigan Farmers Markets Food Assistance Partnership, Michigan Food and Farming Systems, Michigan Food Policy Council, Michigan Land Use Institute, Michigan State University Extension, People's Food Co-op of Kalamazoo.



- More than 300 people attended this year's event
- 68% of those surveyed were first-time attendees
- 30% of past attendees saw an increase in sales that they attribute to the event
- 90% of those surveyed either have or are working on a farm food safety plan





# Supporting Ag Stewardship

- Agricultural Stewardship Committee
- Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program
- Farm and Grazing Tours





**2009 Farm and Grazing Tour, Triple H Farms in St. Johns**





**MAEAP Verification of Vandalia Gardens**





**2009 Farm and Grazing Tour, AppleSchram Organic Orchards in  
Charlotte**



# Informing Public Policy

- Michigan Food Policy Council
- Farmers Markets at the Capitol
- Ag Day at the Capitol
- MDA Committees and Workgroups
- Cottage Food Law







**July 23 “Select Michigan Farmers Market” at the Capitol**





# Some Accomplishments

- Promoting the [Multicultural Farmers Program](#), which has reached more than 320 limited resource farmers, helping 60% of them to improve their farming operation, economic viability and resource connections.
- Developing the [Michigan Farmers Market Association](#), with nearly 150 members, which helps Michigan's 200+ farmers markets thrive as marketplaces for local food and farm products.
- Initiating two [kitchen incubators](#) in Hart and Bad Axe, which have helped more than 70 agripreneurs develop new products.



# Some Accomplishments

- Coordinating the Hoophouse Program to extend Michigan's growing season with MSU by studying production and economics of 12 hoophouses in MI.
- Establishing the Food & Ag Innovation Center, which grew into the MSU Product Center for Agriculture and Natural Resources and has served more than 1,600 customers and aided 145 new ventures, creating or retaining more than 1,000 jobs.
- Sponsoring conferences, workshops and seminars that have served more than 5,500 participants over the past 12 years.



# Joint Accomplishments

- Coordinating the Meet the Buyers event, where in 2010, some 250 growers met with retail and wholesale buyers and 30 percent have increased sales.
- Facilitating discussions about state policy and informing legislative decisions on family farms, sustainable agriculture and local food, e.g. egg and cottage food laws, access to fresh, unprocessed whole milk, poultry/meat processing, farmers markets rules and regulations.
- Hosting the “Select Michigan Day” farmers markets, which brought more than 50 vendors and thousands of attendees to the Capitol lawn to purchase over \$80,000 in Michigan products in 2010.



# Want to Know More?

- Contact us at (517) 432-0712 or [miffs@msu.edu](mailto:miffs@msu.edu)
- Visit us online at [www.miffs.org](http://www.miffs.org)
- Become a Fan on Facebook or Follow us on Twitter

**Thank you for your interest in MIFFS!!**